

26
A
SERMON
PREACH'D AT
Haberdashers Hall,

July the 13th, 1712.

On Occasion of the
DEATH

Of the Reverend
Mr. Richard Stretton, M. A.
and Minister of the Gospel.

Who dy'd July the 3d. Aged Eighty.

By MATTHEW HENRY, Minister
of the Gospel. R

To which is added,
A Short Account of his LIFE.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. Lawrence, at the Angel in the Poultry; R. Robinson,
at the Golden Lion in St. Paul's Church-yard; N. Cliffe, and
D. Jackson, at the Bible and Three Crowns in Cheapside. 1712.

W. Musgrave.



B
A
feaf
othe
ther
to w
gone
not
that
and
Tri
with
Wor
Vic
in t
Go
and
our
Hea
they
Wo
pre
mig
upo
in t
lugs
Wa
kno
Noa

2 COR. VIII. 16.

But Thanks be to God, which put the same earnest Care into the Heart of Titus for you.

A Thanksgiving Text may seem very improper for a Funeral Sermon; especially for one that was so useful in his Generation; that liv'd justly respected, and dies justly lamented. I confess it would have been very seasonable upon this Occasion to call you, for God by this and other the like Providences calls us all, calls us aloud, (whether we will hear, or whether we will forbear) *Isa. 22. 12.* to weeping and to mourning; not for those that are gone to the Regions of Bliss and Joy Above, weep not for them, but for ourselves and for our Children, that are left behind in these lower Regions of Sin and Wo. Even then when our Saviour said with an Air of Triumph, *Now I am no more in the World,* he said with an Air of Tenderness, *But these are in the World;* to teach us, though not to envy those that have got the Victory, yet to pity ourselves, and one another, who are yet in the Conflict! And such an Instance of Stupidity it is, that God is justly and highly displeased at it, if when righteous and merciful Men perish, and are taken away from our World, we do not consider it, and lay it to Heart; for though it is a Good to come in t'other World that they remove to, a promised Good, it is an Evil to come in this World that they remove from, a threatened Evil, in the Apprehension of which it becomes us to bumble ourselves under the mighty Hand of God. The Removal of good Men, may be look'd upon as an ill Omen; when they are commanded off that stood in the Gap, we have Reason to fear the breaking in of a Deluge of Judgments upon us; and God hereby gives fair Warning to a careless World, to prepare accordingly. We know what followed the calling of Lot out of Sodom, and of Noah into the Ark. *Joh. 17. 11.* *Isa. 57. 1.*

1 Thes. 5. 18. But it is our Duty in every Thing to give Thanks; whatever the Will of God's Providence is, *this is the Will of his Precept in Christ Jesus concerning us*; and it is such a Duty as will well consist with all the Instances of holy, gracious Mourning: Even then when we sorrow for Sin, our own and others, yet we must *rejoyce in God*, and have our Heart disposed to his Praises. That Mourning is either not from a right Principle; or exceeds due Bounds, and is the *Sorrow of the World*, that puts us out of Tune for Thanksgiving: When we are never so much burthened with the Sense of Guilt, we ought to say, *But Thanks be to God*, there is Rest in Christ; when we mourn for our Afflictions we may say, *But Thanks be to God* we are out of Hell; nay, and *Thanks be to God* these Afflictions are designed to further us in our Way to Heaven. The Truth is, we never want *Matter for Praise*, if we did not want a Heart; and our Comfort in God would be more abundant, if we did *abound more* in Thanksgiving to God. And therefore I hope you will not think this Text at all *unsuitable* to this solemn Occasion. Holy Job in his Grievs
 Job 1. 21. *blessed the Name of the Lord*, who had graciously *given* that which he had now *taken away*; and who, even in *taking away* he was sure neither did him any *Wrong*, nor *meant him any Hurt*. And our Blessed Saviour when he wept over the Grave of Lazarus whom
 Joh. 11. 35, he loved, *lift up even his weeping Eyes to Heaven*,
 41. and said, *Father, I thank thee*.

Upon such an Occasion as this, the Removal of good Men, and good Ministers by Death, such as while they lived were Blessings to the World, and Instruments of Good to us, we may find Matter for Praise and Thanksgiving upon the Account both of their *present Happiness*, and their *past Usefulness*.

1. We may look up, and give Thanks to God for *what they are*. For those who *sleep in Jesus*, we have Reason to sorrow not only *not as those that have no Hope*, but as those that have much Comfort and Satisfaction, to be a Ballance and Allay to the Sorrow. We have lost a useful good Man, you here have lost a faithful Minister, I and many others have lost a faithful Friend, *But Thanks be to God*, our Loss is *his Gain*; for so Death is to them to whom *to live is Christ*, it is great Gain,

Gain, quick Gain, everlasting Gain; it is his *Rev. 14. 13*
Blessedness, for so Death is to them that *dye in the*
Lord. He *rests from his Labours*, from the Toil both of Ser-
 vices and Sufferings: With the Body all its Burthens are put
 off, and the Soul has obtained its Discharge from that *Work-*
house, from that *Prison-house*, is set at Liberty, is at Peace, is
 at Rest, and its *Business* is no longer as it was here its *Labor*.
 The best Employments of the best Souls while they are here
 in the Body, are their *Labors*, like *Adam's* tilling the Ground
 after he had sinned, *in the Sweat of his Face*; but the Employ-
 ments of holy Souls in their separate State, are like *Adam's*
dressing the Garden in his innocent Estate, which he did with-
 out *Labor*, and with compleat and constant Pleasure. But
 that is not all; *Thanks be to God* he not only *rests from his La-*
bors, but *his Works follow him*; now he is freed from the Toil
 of them, he receives the Reward of them: They that *work*
in the Lord's Vineyard, and there *bear the Burthen* *Mat. 20. 8.*
and Heat of the Day, when the *Eyening* comes,
 not only retire to their *Repose*, but *receive their Penny*. Poor
Job puts both together when he speaks of the Ser- *Job 7. 2.*
 vant's earnest *Desire*, both of the *Shadow*, and of
 the *Reward of his Work*.

Look up therefore and see with an Eye of Faith that *Joy*
 of our Lord, that Fulness of Joy into which this good and faith-
 ful *Servant* is now entered; that *Glory*, that far more exceed-
 ing and eternal *Weight of Glory* with which he is now crown'd;
 and then you will see Reason to *rejoyce* with him, and to
 glory with him, and to say, *Thanks be to God* who has given
 him the *Victory*; *If we loved him we would rejoyce*, *Joh. 14. 28.*
 and bless God for the happy Exchange he has
 made, because he is *gone to the Father*; and as Christ said, *My*
Father is greater than I, i. e. my State with my Father will
 far excell my present State in *Glory*, so we may say of him
 and others that have fought the good *Fight*, and finished their
Course, it is better with them where they are; than where
 they were.

It is more a Matter of Thanksgiving when the Lives of
 good Men, though still great Blessings to others, yet are become
 through the Decays and Infirmities of Age *Burthens to them-*
selves, and their Souls begin to grow weary of them; which
 was the Case here. Though Old Age carries with it both

Dignity and Opportuniy, though the *hoary Head* be a *Crown of Glory*, yet even when it is found in the *Way of Righteousness*, the Days are called *Evil Days*, and the Years such as a Man has little *Pleasure in*; when the *Light is darkned*, the *Clouds return after the Rain*, the *Keepers of the House tremble*, and the *strong Men bow themselves*, then to *put off the earthly House of this Tabernacle*, when it is thus gone out of *Repair*, and remove to the *Building of God*, the *House not made with Hands*, eternal in the *Heavens*, is a blessed *Exchange*; *Thanks be to God* that one we loved so well has made that *Exchange*: You lately heard him *groaning being burthened*, but now he is *triumphing in his Release*, now he is *singing Hallelujahs* to him that sits on the *Throne*: You lately saw him even *dragging the Chain of Life*, compassed about with *Infirmities*, and full of *Pains*; but now he is *eased*, now he is *comforted*, now he is full of *Delights*, and is made to drink of the *River of Divine Pleasures*: You lately saw him *weak*, and scarce able to set one *Foot* before another, but now he is among those that *mount up with Wings like Eagles*, that *run and are not weary*, that *walk and are not faint*.

This is the more to be rejoyced in, because it is a *Satisfaction to the Longings* of a gracious Soul; it is what it has often *wished for*, what it has been *long waiting for*; and the longer it has continued in the *Body*, the more *welcome* will the *Release*, the *Exchange* be. It has oft look'd through the *Lattices*, and cry'd, *Why are his Chariot-wheels so long a coming?* How then doth it triumph now, as that good Man did; *He is come, He is come*; *Canaan* was a pleasant Land indeed to those that had been *Forty Years* *wandering* in a *Wilderness*.

Prov. 13. 12. Though *Hope deferred*, *Hope of Heaven deferred* maketh the *Heart sick*; yet when at Length the *Desire cometh*, it is so much the more a *Tree of Life*. Now *Thanks be to God*, for the happy *Remove* of our *Christian Friends* from *Darkness* to *Light*, from *Sorrow* to *Joy*, from the *Remainders of Sin*, to the *Perfection of Holiness*, from the *toilsom and hazardous Services* of *Christ's Camp* on *Earth*, to the *pleasant and glorious Services* of his *Court* in *Heaven*. And especially *Thanks be to God* for the good *Hope* we any of us have through *Grace* that we shall be *with them shortly*, shall be *for ever with them*. And if we have

have this Hope in us, let us *purify ourselves* as they are pure.

2. We may look back, and give Thanks to God for *what they were*. And that is the Matter of Thanksgiving which the Text leads us to, and which therefore I must enlarge upon.

When those that have been in their Day and Place useful to us, to others, to many, and serviceable to the Glory of God are removed, and we see *the End of their Conversation*, one of the great Duties required of us is to *give Thanks to God that ever we had such Friends*, that by his Grace they were made Blessings to us, and that they were continued to us so long. This is a Duty we are apt to forget, when God in his Providence hath made Breaches upon our Comforts, and to think that our Sorrow for the Death of our dear Relations will be our Excuse for the Omission; whereas if at such a Time we would *intermix* Thanksgivings for former Mercies with our Complaints of present Losses, it would redound very much both to God's Glory, and to our own Comfort.

We have now parted with one that faithfully served his Generation according to the Will of God, that in the Sphere wherein Divine Providence had placed him was long a burning and shining Light; of whom it might be said as of *Jeboiada*, (who for this Reason had Honor done him at his Death) *that he had done good in Israel*. Now Thanks be to God for him, and for all that Good which God wrought in and by him. 2 Chron. 24. 16.

But there is something more particular which I had an Eye to in the Choice of this Text on this Occasion; all that knew good Mr. Stretton, know this of him, that he was a very zealous, active Man to promote *Works of Charity*; that he was very liberal himself, and industrious to excite and engage the Liberality of others; he was one that *devised liberal Things*, and laid out himself in them, that had Cafes of Compassion much at Heart, relating both to the Souls and Bodies of Men, and with Pleasure took Pains to get suitable Relief for them. This was the Grace, this the Service in which he was eminent, in which he *excell'd*, and which made him a very great Blessing to many. Now this is that for which Titus is here praised, that he was an active Man among the *Corinthians* to press and promote a charitable Collection and Contribution, that now was going round among the Churches of the Gen-

riles, for the Relief of the poor Saints in Judea; who were at this Time great Sufferers both by the Iniquity, and in the Calamity of their Country: Or rather, God is here praised, who made Titus instrumental in that good Work among the Corinthians; as others were in other Places.

1. It is here mentioned to the Praise of Titus, that he had in his Heart an earnest Care for the Corinthians, and for their Well-doing.

2. It is mentioned to the Praise of God, that he put into his Heart an earnest Care for them; and so made him a Blessing to them.

Now these Two will very well consist together, the praising of Titus, and the praising of God for Titus. There is a Debt of Honor owing to those whom God makes Use of as the Instruments of his Providence or Grace in Kindness to us or others; Do that which is good, and thou shalt have Praise of the same. St. Paul was far from giving flattering Titles to any, and yet in this Chapter he calls the Brethren who were employed in this Service, the Messengers, the Apostles of the Churches, and the Glory of Christ.

And often in his Epistles he takes Occasion to give a good Character, and a good Report of those who had done well. If the good Report Demetrius hath be founded in Truth, St. John also is ready to bear Record, and to attest it. But this must not intrench upon the Honor due to God only; the Praise must pass through the Instruments to God, and in him all must centre, as the Apostle here takes Care it should. Thanks be to God, which put this earnest Care into the Heart of Titus for you.

For the First Thing; It is mentioned to the Praise of Titus, that he had in his Heart an earnest Care for the Corinthians.

Observe, (1.) What Service he did was from a Principle within, from something in his Heart; there is the Treasure, there is the Fountain, whence the Words and Actions are fetch'd, or rather, do flow; if that be well fix'd, and well furnished, all is well done: What is said of the Servants of Men, is true of all the Servants of Christ, then they do the Will of God acceptably, when they do it from the Heart, for then with good Will they do Service. It was St. Paul's Comfort that he serv'd God with his Spirit in the Gospel of his Son. Nor is any Work

Rom. 1. 9.

of

of Piety or Charity properly a good *Work*, unless it be *Heart-Work*; If I give all my Goods to feed the Poor, and have not Love seated in my Heart, it profits nothing. 1 Cor. 13. 3.

(2.) It was a Principle of *Care*, that acted him in this Service. The Word *Σπουδή* signifies a close Application and Intention of Mind to the Business he was employ'd in, a Concern to have it done well, Fear least there should be any Mistake or Miscarriage in it, Diligence and Industry, and Expedition in the Prosecution of it. What Titus found to do for the Glory of God, and the Good of the Souls of Men, he did it with all his Might, and made a Business of it. We translate it an earnest Care; his Heart was upon it, and he left no Stone unturn'd to bring it to a good Issue.

(3.) It was the same earnest Care; some Copies read it *Τὴν αὐτὴν σπουδὴν*, such an earnest Care, so great, so active, so constant; such a Care as you were Witnesses of the Fruit of. But most Copies read *Τὴν αὐτὴν σπουδὴν*, the same earnest Care; he had the same Care for them that he had for other Churches to whom he was nearer related, and with whom he was better acquainted; or, he had the same Care that St. Paul himself had, who therefore calls him his Partner, v. 23.

Now in the Care, the earnest Care, that Titus had for the Churches, we are to consider him both in general as a Minister of the Gospel, and in particular as an Agent in the Work of Charity.

1. Let us consider him as an Evangelist, for so Timothy, and he, and many others were; he was an Assistant to the Apostles, both in planting Churches, and in watering those that were planted, in forming them, and setting in Order the Things that were wanting in them; not fix'd to one Place, for then we should not find him employ'd in the same Work in so many Places as we do; but like Paul, like Christ himself, he went about doing Good, and he gave himself wholly to it; he did it with an earnest Care both to do much Good, and to do it well, and to do it effectually, and to good Purpose. Paul commends Timothy, another Evangelist, for this, that he did naturally care for the State of Souls, for the State of the Churches; and Epaphroditus, another Evangelist, for this, that he longed after

Phil. 2. 20.

Phil. 2. 26.

them

Col. 4. 13. *them all, and had a great Zeal for them. They were Men that had their Heart in their Work, and laid the Success of it near their Hearts.*

That which Titus is here commended for is, the earnest Care he had for those of the Church of Corinth, and for their spiritual Welfare. And concerning this we may observe,

1. Though Titus was not under any particular Obligation to the Corinthians, as their settled Pastor, yet he had an earnest Care for them, and they were very much influenced by his Care, and were very observant of what he said to them. He did not ask, *What are they to me?* nor was he ask'd what he had to do to concern himself about them? for our Saviour has taught us in the Parable of the good Samaritan, that we must look upon him as our Neighbor whom we have Opportunity of shewing Kindness to, or receiving Kindness from, without Distinction of Nations in the World, or Congregations in the Church, further than prudential Considerations, and the Rules of good Order may direct. God is no Respector of Persons in his Bounty, nor must we be so in ours. Titus has an earnest Care in his Heart to make himself a Blessing wherever he comes, and such should we have; we must study to serve some good Purpose in every Place where Providence casts our Lot; which is the Meaning of Solomon's

Eccl. 11. 3. *Similitude, If the Tree fall towards the South, or towards the North, in the Place where the Tree falls, there it shall be, and be of some Use or other. The more extensive our Usefulness is, the more it resembles his Goodness whose tender Mercies are over all his Works. Wherever we see a human Face, we may conclude there is a human Soul, and if we can do any Thing we must have Compassion upon it, and help it, remembering who it was that said, Am I my Brother's Keeper? Did we duly consider the Worth of precious Souls, we would have an earnest Care for them. We should look upon those about us, though they be all of them Strangers to us, as our Fellow-Creatures, and Partakers of the same Nature with us, as our Fellow-Christians, and Partakers of the same Grace with us, they are or may be so, and then remember that our Rule is, As we have Opportunity*

Gal. 6. 10. *to do Good to all Men, but especially to them that are of the Household of Faith.*

2. Though

2. Though *Titus* had many to take Care of, many Churches that he visited, and interested himself in the Affairs of, yet his Care for each of them was an earnest Care. The Stream of his pious Concern run broad, and yet it run deep; he lov'd many, and yet he lov'd much: And herein he walked as he had blessed *Paul* for an Example, who took upon him daily the Care of all the Churches, and yet had such a tender Affection for particular Believers, that if any one were weak, it weakened him, if any one were offended, it made him burn. The Extensiveness of his Care abated nothing of the Earnestness of it. When *Paul* saith, he would gladly spend and be spent for the *Corinthians*, he immediately adds concerning *Titus*; that he walked in the same Spirit, walked in the same Steps.

2 Cor. 11.
28, 29.

2 Cor. 12.
15, 18.

Some are made remiss and careless by the Greatness of their Undertaking, they grasp at too much, and then think that will excuse them in their Neglects; but the more *Titus* had to do, the more closely and vigorously he applied himself to it; that though he could not be in two Places at once, yet he might do two Days Work in one, by a double Diligence. What a great deal of good Work may a good Man do in his Place, if he go on in it with an earnest Care, like that of *Titus* here; a Care to time Things aright, to improve Opportunities, to do the Work of God with as little Noise as may be; and to avoid every Thing that is foreign to our Business, or diverting from it. We should have an earnest Care to husband well the Thoughts of our Heart, and the Minutes of our Time, that neither of them be idled away, and suffered to run waste, and then what a great deal of Good might we bring about. Though a wise Man would not thrust himself into a Hurry of Business, nor have more Irons in the Fire than he can look after, yet a good Man would cover a Fulness of Business, according as his Capacity is, that whenever his Master comes he may be found doing.

3. Though there were others that had the Care of the *Corinthians*, and whose Business it was to direct, exhort, and quicken them, yet *Titus* shew'd the same Care for them that they did; not that he would intrude into other Men's Office, or take their Work out of their Hands, but he would strengthen their Hands, and carry on their Work,

second

second what they said, and *add thereto many like Words*. He saw there was need of all the Help that might be for the Furtherance of the Gospel there, and all little enough, and therefore was willing to *lend a Hand*: And he did it with so much Humility and Love, as made it a great Encouragement, and no Disparagement to those that were *statedly* employed in the Service of their Souls. It becomes Ministers thus to be *Fellow-Helpers* in the Work of God, to carry it on with *united Force*, joyning Hands and Hearts in it: And the Industry of others should not *superfede*, but *quicken* ours; their Activity should not be an Excuse for our Sloth, but rather a Spur to our Diligence. Others are busy, let not us be idle; though we have but *two Talents*, though we have but *one* to trade with, if we be diligent and faithful, we shall have as sure a Reward, as those that are intrusted with *five*.

You here have lost a Minister that had a *Care*, an earnest Care for Souls, and for their Welfare in both Worlds.

1. His Care began at the right End, for it was in the first Place about his own Soul, and the Prosperity and Salvation of that. This Charity must *begin at Home*. Paul's Charge

1 Tim. 4. 16. to Timothy is, *Take heed to thyself first*, that thou may'st *save thyself*; and those are not likely to do any Thing to Purpose for the Souls of others, that

are regardless of their own, to shew others the Way to Heaven, that walk not in it themselves. In vain were we made *Keepers of the Vineyards*, if our own *Vineyards* we have not kept.

1 Thes. 2. 10. You are *Witnesses* for him that is gone, and God also, how *holily*, and *justly*, and *unblameably* he walked among you; that his Conversation in the

2 Cor. 1: 12. World was in *Simplicity* and *godly Sincerity*, with Plainness and Integrity, and as became an *Israelite* indeed, without Guile; not with *fleshy Wisdom*, but by the Grace of God, as one whose earnest Care it was, and the Top of his Ambition to *approve himself to God*, and to be *accepted of him*. Of him *his Praise* was, and not of *M.n.*

His Concern for his own spiritual and eternal Welfare, express'd itself very much when he *saw the Day approaching*, in his earnest Desire to make sure Work for another World; After serious Enquiries into the State of his own Soul, he
said

said with a pleasing Earnestness, to one that found him musing, and it seem'd to be the Result of many Thoughts, *Well, if we stand in a Covenant Relation to God as ours, all is safe and well.* He often express'd the admiring Sense he had of the *Free Grace of God in Christ* to his Soul; ascrib'd all the Glory of his Comforts and Hopes to that Grace, and in a Dependance upon that, enjoy'd a holy Security, and Serenity of Mind. Though he still maintain'd a godly Jealousy of himself, and a humble Fear lest he should seem to come short, yet he finish'd joyfully, with this Word, and it was one of the last Words he was heard to say, *I know, The Lord is my Rock, and my God.* The Assurance of this was it that enabled him to bid Death welcome, and even in that dark-som Vally to fear no Evil. Those cannot sink that have the Lord for their Rock, to stay themselves upon; those cannot but be happy, eternally happy, that have him for their God! And can you say, my Brethren, can you say it upon good Grounds, that the Lord is your Rock, and your God? Have you covenanted with him, and devoted yourselves to him, and do you make it your constant Care and Business to please him? Your Ministers have Souls to save as well as you, and upon the same Terms; and they call you to build upon no other Foundation but what they build upon themselves; to venture in no other Bottom, but what they themselves venture in, into another World. O that the Comfort which those have found in their dying Moments, that have by Faith made the Lord their Rock, their God, might engage you all this Day, to avouch him for yours, and now to commit your Spirits into his Hand, to be sanctified and ruled by the Word and Spirit of his Grace, and then you may chearfully at Death commit your Spirits into his Hand to be received into everlasting Habitations, may do it with a triumphant Confidence, knowing whom you have believed, even one who is able to keep what you have committed to him against that Day; if the Lord be your Rock, and your God, he will be so to Death, through Death, and beyond Death, and you may glory in him.

2 Tim. i.
12.

2. He had an earnest Care for that particular Congregation which was under his Charge; you here can witness for him that he had a Concern for your Souls, and greatly longed after

after you all, even travelled in Birth again to see Christ formed in you. He had indeed *Curam Animarum*, the Cure of Souls, and did not make his Charge a *Sine Cure*: You know how constant he was with you, how rarely he was absent from you, scarce one Lord's Day in a Year; how he was in his Element when he was in your Service, and how solicitous

2 Cor. 12. to do all Things, dearly Beloved, for your edifying.
19. You know how he labour'd among you, even then when he labour'd under the Burthens of Old

Age, and how lively he was in praying and preaching, even then when in other Things his natural Force was so much abated. He hath sometimes observ'd to his Friends, that his Work and his Strength kept Pace together; when he went into the Pulpit he seem'd to have fresh Supplies of Strength and Vigor, and to forget his Weakness: But when he had done his Work he became as at other Times; which as it was an Evidence that his Heart was in his Work, so it was an

Deut. 33. Instance of the fulfilling of the Promises, that as
25. the Day, so shall the Strength be; and that they

Isa. 40. 31. who wait upon the Lord shall renew their Strength;
shall still bring forth Fruit in Old Age, even when the Youths faint and are weary, to shew that
Psal. 92. the Lord is upright. What other Proofs he gave
14. of his earnest Care for your Souls, in visiting

you, conversing with you, and watching over you, you would do well to recollect, that now you have lost him, you may still be Gainers by his Labours of Love among you.

3. He had an earnest Care for other Congregations, and for the Progress and Success of the Work of God in them. He had an earnest Care for many Congregations in this City, for their Supply, their Order, and the Preservation of Peace and Love in them. One Instance I must not omit is, the earnest Care he took about the Morning Lecture, every Day, kept up a Fortnight at a Place, and then removing to another: He has been long (as I have heard) the principal Person that has concern'd himself about it, and been active in it, to put it into a Method, and to direct the Removes of it; wherein he has done good Service to the Interests of Religion in your City; for I hope wherever it comes it brings a Blessing along with it, and many Souls have had Cause

Cause to bless God for it. And I trust now he is gone God will put the same earnest Care into the Heart of some or other for the keeping up of that good Work, that it may not suffer Damage by his Remove. Nor did his Care confine itself to this City, and the Congregations here, but he had an earnest Care for many Places in the Country, at a great Distance, to see them well provided for, and Ministers conveniently settled. And though being indispos'd to Travel, he seldom went in Person into the Country, yet by Letter and Applications here in this Centre, he shew'd what a Con-
~~lict~~ *lict* he had, as Paul speaks, for many that never Col. 2. 1,
saw his Face in the Flesh, that their Hearts might 2.
be comforted, and knit together in Love. He was always ready to advise young Ministers, and assist them with his Interest, many of whom therefore with good Reason call'd him *Father*, and will bless God who put such a Care into his Heart for them. Thus he did Good at a Distance, thus he did *lasting Good*, the Fruit whereof remains; and such Good large Souls will covet to do. Those that have Opportunity of helping young People into the World, of helping them into Business, and do it, do good Service not only to their own, but to the next Generation; much more do they so, who forward the *best Employment*, wherein the Honor of Christ, and the Welfare of the Souls of Men is so nearly interested, and so help to preserve the *best En- tail*.

Let us now see what Improvement we may make of this Part of *Titus's* Care, as a Minister, thus in some Measure copied out.

1. It sets a good Example before Ministers, whose Hearts should in like Manner be full of earnest Care about the Work they have to do, and the great Trust committed to them; and happy were it for the Church, if they were all thus. The Ministry requires an earnest Care, so great and important is the Undertaking, and so many the Difficulties that are to be grappled with, and got over; nothing will be brought to pass in it by a loose, careless, desultory Mind, that has got a Habit of trifling.

Let those that enter upon the Work of the Ministry seriously examin themselves, whether they can and will take Care, and take Pains, for if not, they will have Reason to fear

fear lest the Work suffer by falling into their Hands. The Hebrew Phrase for being consecrated is, having the Hand filled: Those that are employ'd to minister in Holy Things have their Hands full of Work, and therefore need to have their Heads and Hearts full of Care. Let those that are engaged in this Work make a Business of it, or they make nothing of it. Mr. Perkins took it for his Motto, *Minister Verbi es, Hoc Age*. We must take heed to the Ministry we have received, that we fulfill it; must be in Care to pray well, and preach well, and live well, in Care to find out profitable Matter, and acceptable Words, Words upon the Wheels; in Care to find out the Truth, to understand it ourselves, to deliver it aright, and accommodate it to the Capacities of those we speak to, must be in Care to give good Instructions, to set good Examples, and at all Times speak and act with Circumspection. There is need of an earnest Care in watching over ourselves, and over the Flock, that we may approve ourselves to our Master, may guard against the Tempter, that none of the Souls committed to our Charge may perish, or if they do, that their Blood may not be required at our Hand. The Charge we have received, the Necessities and Worth of Souls, the Shortness and Uncertainty of our Opportunities of Service, the many Eyes that are upon us, especially his who is all Eye, and above all the Account we must shortly give to the chief Shepherd, forbid us to trifle, and oblige us to go on in our Work with an earnest Care.

2. It lays an Engagement upon People, that have been or are under the Care, the earnest Care of faithful Ministers. You here have long been well taken Care of, and well provided for, the Dresser of your Vineyard has through Grace done his Part, and now he is removed, suffer the Word of Exhortation.

(1.) Examine yourselves how you have improved under his Care, his earnest Care for you, and whether your profiting has appeared in any Proportion to the Opportunities you have enjoy'd: Whether your Growth in Knowledge and Grace has been answerable to the Care that has been taken of you, and the Pains that has been taken with you? What are you the better for all the good Sermons you have heard here, all the Sacraments you have received, and all the Helps you have

have had for your Souls, *in Season and out of Season*. You have had among you an aged Witness for Christ, and his Truths and Ways: To you *Days have spoken*, Job 32. 7. and the *Multitude of Years* has been *teaching you Wisdom*, wherein you have had Advantages above most of your Neighbours; and it may justly be expected that you should be above others a *solid, serious, judicious People*; And is it so? Many Times *Three Years* God has come among you *seeking Fruit*, and what has he found? seeking Fruit in your Closets and Families, in your Callings and Converse, the *Fruits of Righteousness*, and have you not frustrated his Expectations? With some perhaps when he looked for *Grapes*, behold, *wild Grapes*. Consider now with yourselves, whether you were the Joy of your Minister that is gone, or his Grief? Whether by your *Fruitfulness* you recompensed his Care of you, or by your loose and careless Walking you *ill requited* him for it. Are any of you yet barren in this Vineyard, yet cumbring the Ground? O that you would be *alarm'd* by the Death of your Minister! You are all *Strangers to me*, but you are *known to God*. And O that his Word, which is *quick and powerful*, might take hold of your Consciences! While your Minister was with you, he *interceded* for you, as well as *laboured* with you, *Lord, let the barren Fig-tree alone this Year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it*: Luke 13. And is it yet barren? Know then that the 8, 9. Death of your Minister is a Call to you to bring forth Fruit at Length, and then *all shall be well*; but if his *Life and Labours* having been in vain, his *Death* be so too, you will have the more to answer for when the Day comes that you will be *cut down*. He is now gone to *give up his Account*, let each of you think what *Account* can he give of me? If he *give up his Account with Grief*, that will be, as the Apostle speaks, *unprofitable for you*. But I hope there are *those*, there, Heb. 13. 17. are many among you, in whom he saw the Fruit of his Labour, and his *earnest Care*, whom he thank'd God for, as they for him, and who will be his *Crown of Rejoycing* in the Day of the Lord; And what a *joyful Meeting* will there be between him and them in that Day!

(2.) If Ministers have and should have such an *earnest Care for your Souls*, should not you much more have an *earnest, a more earnest Care for your own Souls*? You are *nearest to yourselves*, and this is the One Talent you are each of you *intrusted with*; you have a precious Soul to take Care of, and what Care do you take of it? What Provision do you make for it? for its present Cure and Comfort, and for its future Bliss? What Care do you take to secure it from the Enemies and Evils to which it is exposed, and to supply its Necessities? This is the Charge Deut. 4. 9. *given to every one of you, Take heed to thyself, and keep thy Soul diligently: Keep thy Heart above all Keepings.* Be in Care to get necessary Food and Clothing for your Souls, Rest and a Refuge for them, and a Portion for them that will last as long as they must last. Commit the keeping of them to Jesus Christ, as those that are in Care to have *that* done for them which none but he *can do*. The Care your Ministers have *taken*, and do *take*, for your Souls, though they are accepted of God in it, if they be sincere, yet it will be *no Advantage to you*, if you take not Care for *your own Souls*, nay, it will come into the Account against you, as an *Aggravation* of your Carelessness.

(3.) If Ministers must have this *earnest Care* for the Souls of those under their Charge, surely *Parents and Masters of Families* ought to have *some Care*, to have an *earnest Care* for the spiritual Welfare of those under *their Charge*, their Children, their Servants, to *restrain* them from that which would be to the Prejudice and Ruin of their Souls, and to *provide* that for them which is necessary to their Well-being. You are in Care for their *Bodies*, to provide what is fit for them, you would think yourselves *worse than Infidels* if you did not; And are not their Souls *more precious*, and is not Provision for them *more necessary*? Nature has *put into your Hearts* an *earnest Care* for their *temporal Lives*, O that Grace might in like Manner principle you with a Concern for their *spiritual Lives*! Be *in Care* to teach them the Knowledge of God, that they may not perish through Ignorance, in Care by the most proper Methods to drive out the *Foolishness* that is *bound up in their Hearts*; in Care to make good your Undertaking for them when

when you presented them to Baptism, which was to bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord; in Care that they may not perish through any Default of yours. There are many who are forward to condemn Ministers for their Neglects, who therein do but condemn themselves; who are Non-residents in their own Houses, or are blind and dumb there in the Things of God, and are in no Care that they and their Houses should serve the Lord. But you, I hope, are of those that look well to the Ways of their Household, as those that must give an Account of that Stewardship.

2. We now come to consider Titus as an Active Instrument at this Time in a Work of Charity that was on Foot; And though ordinarily it was not fit that they who gave themselves to the Word and Prayer should serve
Aet. 6. 2.
Tables, and therefore the Collection and Distribution of the Church's Alms was committed to the Deacons, that, to speak in the Language of the Old Testament, had Care of the outward Business of the House of God; Neh. 11. 16.
yet in an extraordinary Case the Apostles themselves were employ'd in Service of that Kind. We read of Relief sent to the Brethren which were in Judea, sent to the Elders or Ministers of the respective Congregations, by the Hands of Barnabas and Saul; And of a Contribution made by them of Macedonia and Achaia, for the poor Saints at Jerusalem. It was in the promoting and carrying on of this good Work that Titus discover'd this earnest Care for the Corinthians. Aet. 11. 29, 30.
Rom. 15. 26.

Now, 1. It is easy to apprehend that herein he shew'd an earnest Care for the Poor Saints at Jerusalem, for whose Use this Collection was made, and a great Concern for them, that they should be speedily and plentifully relieved; in their present Distress; and they would have Reason to say, Thanks be to God, that put into the Heart of Titus this Care for us, and our Families, for otherwise we might have perished. Titus heard what Straights they were reduc'd to, and as one that put his Soul into their Souls Stead, laid out himself to get Supply for them. Though Titus was a Greek, and was never circumcised, as Timothy was, and upon that Account the Saints at Jerusalem
Gal. 2. 3:
(many

(many of whom retained too great an Affection for the Ceremonial Law) were perhaps *cool* towards him, yet he was *active* to do them Service, as Paul also was, though he was the *Apostle of the Gentiles*, and saw some Reason to doubt

Rom. 15. whether the Service he had for *Jerusalem* would
31. be accepted of the *Saints there*; for as our Love,

so our Liberality, must not be confin'd to those that are just of our own Sentiment and Way, but in this Instance as well as others, we must be govern'd by a Catho-

Rom. 12. lick Charity, and as we have Opportunity must do
13. Good to all Men, but must in a particular Manner distribute to the *Necessities of Saints*. We

may suppose that this Relief being sent to the *Elders*, it was intended chiefly for *their* Support, because the People were poor, and persecuted, and in many Places but few, and could not maintain them; so that it seems to have been not only an Act of Charity to the Poor, but an Act of Piety towards God, being intended for the Support of the Gospel, and the Recompence of those that had suffer'd Loss for Christ's Sake; for they were the believing *Hebrews*

that had taken joyfully the Spoiling of their Goods: Heb. 10.
34. This was the good Work that Titus had this earnest Care to help forward.

And it was good Work of this Kind that our deceased Friend and Father did abound in, did abide in to the last. He was himself ready to every good Work, and willing to communicate to his Power, yea, and beyond his Power; what he did himself in Charity he conceal'd, as much as possible, from those about him, and was so far from boasting of it, that according to our Saviour's Rule, his Left Hand knew not what his Right Hand did: And he was

Isa. 32. 8. not only liberal, but he devised liberal Things; and had Projects for doing Good; his Head was still working that Way, as one that look'd not on his own Things only, or chiefly, but on the Things of others; of others Souls, of others Bodies. I have been told that it was very much by his Influence and Management that the Fund which is kept up by many of the well disposed Congregations in this City, for the Assistance and Encouragement of Ministers in the Country, whose Congregations are poor, was first set on Foot: And there are many in all Parts of the

the Kingdom whose Loins, nay, whose Souls bless him, and the many others, both Ministers and People, who promote and supply it, and bless God for him and them. If a Cup of cold Water given to Prophets, to Disciples, in the Name of Disciples and Prophets, shall in no wise lose its Reward, what a full Reward shall be given from the Lord our God to those by whose generous Liberality Families of Prophets are help'd with Food for the Body, and Congregations of Disciples with Food for the Soul. And I have had Opportunity of observing (and I think it was praise-worthy, and very exemplary) his diligent and constant Attendance, not only upon the Meetings for the prudent and regular Distribution of that Charity, but upon the Week-Day Lecture, where he would have Opportunity of Meeting with Ministers, to whom or by whom he might be serviceable; which shew'd how much his Heart was upon it to do Good. He was very active, as I am informed, in furnishing poor Ministers, and Candidates for the Ministry, with useful Books: A great deal of Money, and Time, and Pains, he bestow'd this Way; and herein his earnest Care reach'd as far as the North of Scotland, large Sums being procur'd by him for the erecting of Libraries there; and an excellent Method it was, both for the diffusing of Knowledge to distant Places, and the preserving of it to future Ages. In his Labours for carrying on that and other pious Designs, he was indefatigable to the last, and his Diligence kept Pace with his earnest Care. He had had an Acquaintance with divers Parts of the Kingdom, was born in Leicestershire; the First Fruits of his Ministry were at Petworth in Sussex, from that Place he was thrown out (from a Curacy there) at the Restoration. But upon that, Providence cast his Lot in Yorkshire, where he continued about Seventeen Years, and then removed to this City. And what a Blessing he was to that County, by his extensive Beneficence, and Care for them, after his Removal hither, I am told there are many that will witness, that never saw his Face.

2. It is as true, though not so easily apprehended, that Titus shew'd as earnest a Care for the Corinthians, whom he perswaded to do Good, as for the Saints at Jerusalem, whom

Mat. 10.

41, 42.

Ruth 2.

12.

he desir'd that this Good might be *done to*. He appear'd in this Matter no less solicitous for those whom he applied himself to, than for those whose Cause he pleaded. The Churches of Macedonia had been very forward in bringing in their Quota, to this Contribution, even their
 vers. 2. *deep Poverty abounded to the Riches of their Liberty:* And this is call'd the Grace of God bestowed
 vers. 1. *upon the Churches of Macedonia;* the good Work they did for God, was the Effect of a good Work he wrought in them, and that was an Evidence of his good Will towards them, and therefore is call'd *his Grace bestowed on them;* for it is certain, instead of making God our Debtor by any Service we do to him, the more we do for him the more we are indebted to him for putting us into a Capacity, and giving us an Opportunity to honor him, and especially for inclining our Hearts to do it, and accepting of us in the doing of it.

Now Titus had an earnest Care for the Corinthians, that they who came not behind in any Gift, might
 1 Cor. 1. not come behind in this Gift; he was in Care
 7. that they should not be slow in their Contributions, because Paul had boasted of them, that
 Chap. 9. 2. *Achaia was ready a Year ago;* And in Care that they should not be sneaking in them, but that what was gather'd should be considerable: He was in Care that they should give like themselves. The Corinthians were generally a rich People, and liv'd great, whence it became a Proverb, Every Man cannot pretend to live at Corinth. Now Titus was jealous of them, lest they should pinch their Charity, to feed their Luxury, and therefore laid out himself among them, to perswade them to give handsomely upon this Occasion, that it might not be said they had much, but they spent it upon themselves; they were rich in Wealth, but poor in good Works. He was in Care they should give like other Churches, and so preserve their Reputation, and keep up the Figure they made among the Churches. The particular Kindness he had for this Church of Corinth, did not put him upon contriving how he might excuse them from this good Work, or make it easy to them, that they might be the more kind to him; but on the contrary,

trary, because he *lov'd them* he was very earnest with them to do *more* than otherwise they would have done.

And thus this *good Man* whom we have parted with, besides the good Works he did at his own Expence, laid out himself to *provoke others to Love, and to good Works*, to perswade them to it, and to bring about great Designs of Good by the Assistance of *many*, which could not be compassed by *one*. He had an Acquaintance with many considerable Families, both in City and Country, and an Interest in them; which he improv'd not for himself, but for the Publick Good. All that knew him valu'd him for his *try'd Integrity*, and that great Plainness and Sincerity which was remarkable in him; whatever he did, like *Gaius*, he did it *faithfully, both to the Brethren, and to Strangers*; and therefore what was put 3 Joh. 5. into his Hands for the carrying on of any good Work, was deposited with an entire Satisfaction. He used to say, that he kept up his Acquaintance with Persons of Estate and Figure as long as he could improve it for the doing of Good, and when it would no longer be made to serve that Purpose, he *let it drop*; for, said he, *I'll never adore a gilded Post*.

Now my Text leads me to observe, that herein appeared his *earnest Care* for those whose Assistance he procured in Works of Charity; as much for their *doing well*, as for the *well-doing* of those whom he procured Assistance for. All agree that those he *beg'd for* have lost a Friend, but I must tell you, that those he *beg'd of* have a great Loss of him too; they have lost one that even in that was a *true Friend*, and one that had an *earnest Care* for them. I doubt it will be hard to convince People of this; I fear there are many to whom their Friends and Ministers are *scarce welcome* when they come to *recommend* Objects of Charity to them, and press them to give liberally, where the Case is urgent; they are *glad to see them*, but not when they come *on that Errand*; If they come to visit them when they are sick, to advise them when they are in Distress, or to be any Ways helpful to them, they take it as an Instance of their *earnest Care for them*; but if they come to them as *Titus* did to the *Corinthians*, to beg Money of them for the *poor Saints*, they are so far from looking upon it as an Instance of their *Care*

for them; that they receive them with a *Stiffness*, and *Shineſs*, as if they came to *impoſe* upon them, and to pick their Pockets; and if they do give, it is not with that *Chearfulneſs* that God delights in.

I would endeavour therefore for the Amending of this Matter, to make it out that thoſe are to be accounted your Friends, who with Prudence and Diſcretion propoſe to you fitting Objects of Charity, and preſs you to give liberally to them, or for the Encouragement of any Work of Piety; you are to *take it kindly*, and to reckon it an Inſtance of their *earnest Care* for you. Consider,

1. It is not for *themselves* that they are thus *ſollicitous*, nor in Hopes to make any Advantage of it to *themselves*, or *their own Families*; nay, on the contrary it may be a *Loſs* and *Damage* to themſelves; for with ſome at leaſt the more they improve their Intereſt for others, the leſs they have to improve upon their own Account. They do not herein *ſeek their own Things*, but as the Apoſtle here did, they ſtudiouſly avoid that which might give Occaſion to *any to blame them, in this Abundance which is adminiſtered by them*; they hope indeed to obtain an Intereſt in God's Bleſſing, and the Saints Prayers, in both which they deſire you may come in for a Share. It is no Pleaſure to them to be *troubleſom* to you, and thoſe for whoſe Supply they do ſolicit you, many Times they are no more *oblig'd* to than you are, nor more *concern'd* for than you *ought to be*, ſo that you have no Reason to take *unkindly* the Applications they make to you. Nay,

2. It is really for you that they have this *earnest Care*; Do they propoſe to you a preſſing Opportunity to do good? Do they follow it with a preſſing Importunity, you ought to take it as a Kindneſs to yourſelves, and to thank God that he has put that *earnest Care* into their Hearts for you. For,

1. They would have you do that which is *your Duty*, a plain, neceſſary, and great Duty, which God requires of all thoſe whom he has intruſted with this World's Goods.

Mic. 6. 8. To love Mercy is the Good you are as much oblig'd to as to do juſtly. To relieve and ſuccour the *Widows* and *Fatherleſs* in their Affliction, is an Eſſential Branch of Pure Religion and unde-

Jam. 1. 26.

filed.

filed. It is a necessary Proof of the Love both of God, and of your Neighbour, dwelling in you. You are God's Tenants, and this is the Rent you have to pay, a *Quit-Rent*, not a *Rack-Rent*, and you are to account it a Kindness to have your Rent call'd for, for you will get nothing by going behind hand. You are *Stewards of the manifold Grace of God*, and you must lay out your Lord's Goods among your Lord's Servants, and as he directs, and whoever assists you in doing so is your Friend, and has a Care for you. It is your Duty to Honour the Lord with your Substance, and thus you are put into the Way of doing it.

1 Pet. 4.
10.

Prov. 3. 9.

Ministers must charge them that are rich in this World, that have more than just a necessary Subsistence for themselves and their Families, with what they have to spare to do good, and to communicate; you ought to give Alms of such Things as you have, and to be ready to every good Work. Put us not to prove that it is your Duty to give just so much, and to such a Person, when it is plain it is your Duty as you have Opportunity to do good to all Men, and to give God his Dues out of what he has given you; of which under the Law he appointed the Priests and the Poor to be his Receivers. Now those who devise liberal Things for you are in Care for you, that you may not omit your Duty, or be found in the Neglect of it, because Omissions are Sins, and must come into Judgment; and particularly the Omission of this Duty; for you know very well those that in the great Day are bid to depart with a Curse, have this charg'd upon them, *I was hungry, and you gave me no Meat, I was thirsty, and you gave me no Drink*; And are not they kind to you, who do all they can to prevent your falling under that Charge, and perishing under that Doom. Say not, if they did not trouble you with their Representations, you should not know it, and that would serve for an Excuse; for if you do not know who are Objects of Charity, because you would not, but discountenanc'd those that recommended them to you, it is all one, as if you did know it, and would not relieve them; *If thou sayest, Behold we knew*

Prov. 24. 12. *knew it not, doth not he that pondereth the Heart consider it, and he that keepeth thy Soul doth he not know it?*

The Duty of giving to Works of Piety and Charity is what we are naturally *backward* to, we would willingly keep what we have, and our corrupt Hearts can easily find out Excuses to shift it off, and therefore we have the more need to be *call'd to it*, and to have even *pure Minds stirred up by Way of Remembrance*, and provok'd by the Zeal of others, and their Forwardness. Those that have themselves an *earnest Care* to do their Duty, will reckon those their best Friends that have an *earnest Care* to quicken them to it, and to help them to overlook those Eccles. 11. 4. *Winds and Clouds* by which they are in Danger of being driven off from *sowing and reaping*. It is a Care for your precious Souls, that they may not lye under Guilt and Wrath, a Care like that of Paul's, *lest by some Means the Tempter have* 1 Thes. 3. 5. *tempted you*, and a Spirit of Worldliness prevail over you, and so the Labour of your Ministers among you should be *in vain*. We have Reason to be as thankful to God for their Advice who excite us to Duty, as David was for Abigail's, when she was instrumental to prevent his Sin.

2. They would have you do that which will be your Honour, and which will put a Reputation upon you, and therefore it must be look'd upon as an Instance of their *earnest Care* for your Preferment. In Acts of Bounty and Beneficence you resemble God, who *is Good*, and *doth Good*, and therefore *doth Good*, because he *is Good*. None come nearer being *perfect as our Father in Heaven is perfect*, than those who are *merciful as our Father in Heaven is merciful*. Hereby you become Blessings to your Generation, and Ornaments to the Profession you make of Religion; you give Occasion to your Ministers and Friends to boast of you, as Paul did of these *Corinthians*, and to give Thanks to God for you: This is a *Virtue* that is as much a *Praise*, as any other. It seems to have been a common Saying of our Saviour's, It

is more blessed to give than to receive; it is more honourable, and more comfortable, and therefore you are to reckon those your Friends who would have you put in for a Share in that Blessings.

Act. 20.
35.

You think you do yourselves Honour with your Abundance when you lay it out in rich Clothes, Furniture, and Equipage, or in splendid Entertainments; with these you think you gain and keep up a Reputation; but you would do yourselves much more Honour with your Abundance, if you spar'd something from those Things, and laid it out in Works of Piety and Charity, if you thus honoured God with it, and did Good to others. I appeal to yourselves, which is the more honourable, and desirable Character, to have it said concerning you, Such a one is a fashionable Man, and does Great, or, Such a one is a charitable Man, and doth Good. You reckon those have a real Care of you that help to support and advance your Credit in the Way of Trade and Business, though it may put you to some Expence; And is it not the Fruit of a much more earnest Care for you, to help to maintain your Credit in this best and most gainful Way of Merchandize? If you forfeit the Character of being ready to do Good, you lose the Opportunity of enriching yourselves with the true and most durable Treasures.

3. They would have you do that which you will have Comfort in, and Advantage by in this World, and therefore you are to reckon them your Friends that have a Care for you. When you review your Expences, surely there is nothing you reflect upon, with more Pleasure and Satisfaction, than that which you laid out in Works of Piety and Charity; you may look upon it, not as upon that which you spend in House-keeping, it is gone, and you will hear no more of it, but as upon that which you have put into the best Fund, ventur'd in the surest Bottom, and set out to the best Interest upon the best Security, as Bread cast upon the Waters, which you shall find again after many Days. Read Mr. Gouge's Book, which he calls the Surest and safest Way of Thriving, and you will look upon those as your truest Well-Wishers that forward you in any Work of Piety or Charity, as you do upon those that contribute any Thing towards your outward Prosperity, and the Instances of that.

Your

Your liberal contributing to any good Work, will perhaps *increase*, what you have in the World, will double it; what is so given is *lent to the Lord*, and he has given his Promise that he will *pay it again*; and if he expects at his *Coming to receive his own with Usury*, no Doubt he will

Luke 11. *return us our own.* However it will make what

41. we have *clean to us*, it will make it comfortable

Job 29. 13. Job mentions it as one of the brightest Instance

of his Prosperity that the Blessing of him that

was ready to perish came upon him, and he caused

the Widows Heart to sing for Joy. Many a Prayer will be

put up for you, by those that have an Interest at the Throne

of Grace, which you will have the Benefit of, and you

perhaps when you are gone. It is used as an Argument

with the People to be kind to the Priest, that

Ezek. 44. he may cause the Blessing to rest on thine House

30. may do it by his Prayers with and for thy Family.

Those therefore have an earnest Care for you

who would not have you, for the saving of a little Money

to forfeit that Blessing, or come short of it.

4. They would have you do that which will be Fruitful

abounding to your Account in the Day of Recompence.

Works of Piety and Charity be done from a pious, charitable

Principle, in Faith, and in Dependance upon Christ for

the Acceptance of them, though they cannot merit any

Thing at God's Hand, for of his own we give him, yet he has

graciously assured us, that they shall be rewarded

Luke 14. in the Resurrection of the Just, for God is not un-

14. righteous to forget them. You know when, and

Heb. 6. 10. upon what Account it will be said, I was hungry,

and you gave me Meat, I was thirsty, and you gave

me Drink. If it be not repaid in this World, there is the

more behind; the Heavenly Inheritance will make amends

for all. Those that press you to good Works are in Care

that you may not miss of this Recompence, may not slip

this good Bargain, which will be so much to your Advantage.

They would have you to use your Estate

Luke 16. so as that with them you may make to yourselves

9. Friends, that when ye fail, ye may be received into

everlasting Habitations.

This was St. Paul's Care for the *Philippians*, they were well-disposed to be kind to him, but they lacked Opportunity; they wanted some Friend to do that for them which *Titus* here did for the *Corinthians*, to make a Collection among them for Paul's Assistance, and to convey it carefully to him. Now Paul shews himself well pleas'd that at Length *Epaphroditus* had done it; but he professeth it was not so much upon his own Account, that he might thereby be enabled to live the more comfortably in Prison, *not that I desire a Gift, I could live very contentedly without it; but chiefly upon their Account, that they might have the Comfort and Reward of it, in that Day when all we now say and do will be call'd over again. I desire Fruit that may abound to your Account, that may be reckon'd among the Fruits of your Righteousness, which shall be reaped in Life Eternal; when not a Cup of cold Water given to a Disciple in the Name of a Disciple, to a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet, shall be left out of the Account.*

Now lay all this together, and then tell me whether those are not indeed your Friends, and have not an earnest Care for you, who call upon you to do good and to communicate, look upon them then as your Friends, and look pleasantly upon them when they come upon this Errand. Thank them that they will take the Trouble of a good Work so much upon themselves, and yet bring you in for Sharers in the Honor, Comfort, and Reward of it: Those that would so manage for you, in some advantageous Undertaking for the World, so that you might have nothing to do but to pay in your Money, and receive it again with great Increase, you would reckon yourselves exceedingly oblig'd to. Nor think it enough to be courteous and civil to your Almoners, and to give them a good Look when they come a begging to you, but be free and generous in your Almsgiving, and in what you contribute to every good Work; that you may encourage those who have this earnest Care of you to come to you again. God gives liberally and upbraids not, and so should we, that we may be like him. Remember, it is Seed sown, and observe the Husbandman's Rule in sowing his Ground, Give it Seed enough; for if you sow sparingly, you will reap accordingly. And now you have lost one who us'd to recommend Objects

jects of Charity to you, be the more *inquisitive* after them yourselves; that you may in no wise lose your Reward.

For the Second Thing; It is mentioned to the Praise of God, that he put this earnest Care into the Heart of Titus for them; and Thanks are given to him for it. Now Thanks be to God who by his Providence brought Titus to Corinth, and by his Grace excited and enabled him to do this good Office there.

See how solicitous blessed Paul is upon all Occasions to ascribe the Glory of all the Good that was done, whether by others or by himself, to the Grace of God, and to own in it the Influences and Operations of that Grace; *I laboured, others laboured, yet not I, yet not they,* 1 Cor. 15. *but the Grace of God which was with me, and was* 10. *with them; for by the Grace of God, I am what I am, and they are what they are.* The Doctrine of Free Grace, which is pure Gospel, he not only inculcates in his Preaching and Writing, but applies it, and speaks as one that did himself believe it, and was full of it; for he takes Care to cast every Crown at the Feet of Free Grace, in that he *boasts all the Day long, so as to exclude all other boasting*; in that he is made *always to triumph*; *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy Name give Glory.* Now observe here,

1. That God can put Things into Mens Hearts, beyond what was expected. He is the Sovereign of the Heart, not only to enjoin it what he pleaseth by his Law, but to influence it, and to infuse into it by his Providence and Grace as he pleaseth. He hath Access to Men's Hearts, knows what is in them, what would be in them, and can expunge and insert according to his own Will; and they themselves not be aware of it. He can extinguish the Sparks of Wrath he finds there, and restrain them, Psal. 76. *can blow up the Sparks of Love he finds there* 10. *into a Flame.* They are all in his Hand as the Clay in the Hand of the Potter, and he *fashioneth them* so as to serve his own Purposes by them. *The Way of Man is not in himself,* he cannot think what he will, but the wise God can over-rule him. If the Hearts of Kings are in the Hand of the Lord, to be turned as the Rivers

Rivers of Water which Way soever he pleaseth, though their Hearts of all Mens are most absolute and arbitrary, and unsearchable; much more the Prov. 25. Hearts of inferior Persons. Let no Man boast 3. of his Free Thought, when whatever Devices are in Men's Hearts, it is not their Counsel, but the Counsel of the Lord that shall stand. See in this how God governs the World, by the Hold he hath of the Consciences of Men, and his Power to put Things into their Hearts, so as that they shall accomplish his Designs, as his Hand, though they mean not so, neither doth their Heart think so.

2. That whatever Good is in the Heart of any, it is God that puts it there. If Titus have in his Heart an earnest Care for the spiritual Welfare of the Corinthians, though he is a very good Man, and one that much Good may be expected from, yet even this is not of himself, it is not to be call'd a Natural Affection, it is a gracious one, for the Grace of God wrought it there, that Grace which worketh in good Men both to will and to do that which is Phil. 2. 13. good. Perhaps Titus was steering his Course another Way, when God put it into his Heart to come to Corinth; or, when he came thither on this Errand, perhaps he did not design to press the Thing with any Importunity, but only to propose it, and leave it to them to do as they would; But quite beyond his own Intention God put it into his Heart to be urgent in the Matter, which had a wonderful good Effect; put Zeal into his Heart for the carrying on of this good Work, and then put Words into his Mouth wherewith to press it.

If we have an earnest Care for our own Souls, and for their spiritual and eternal Welfare, it is God that puts it into our Hearts, that gives it to us, so the Word here us'd signifies, it is he that plants it in us; if we have an earnest Care for the Souls of others, particularly of theirs that are under our Charge, we have it from God, for we are not sufficient of ourselves so much as to think a good Thought, much less fix a good Principle, or form 2 Cor. 3. 5. a good Project, but all our Sufficiency is of God. Whatever Evil there is in our Hearts, it is of ourselves, it is, like Weeds in the Garden, the spontaneous Product of the corrupt Soil; this God sees there, he foresees it, and can

can tell the Sinner long before, *At such a Time shall Things come into thy Mind, and thou shalt think an evil Thought*; but it is not of his putting there; no, it is the Good that is found there, all that, and only that, that God puts there. He will own that, and we must own him in it.

3. That Christ's Ministers are in a particular Manner *all that*, and *that only* to his Churches that he makes them to be. They are Stars that shine with a borrow'd Light, and shed no other benign Influences, but what are deriv'd from the Sun of Righteousness. If they have a Care, an earnest Care, a natural Care for the Souls committed to their Charge, it is God that has put it into their Hearts, it is his Grace in them that makes them Blessings to the Places where they are, whether *statedly* or *occasionally*; if they bring a seasonable Word that reacheth the Conscience, and doth Good, it is God that puts it into their Mouths, and gives them what they shall speak. Paul, that Master Workman,

Rom. 15,

8.

Act. 3. 12.

faith nothing of what he has wrought, but of what Christ has wrought by him. Wherefore look we at them then? at Peter and John? at Paul and Apollos? as though by their own Power they did what they do? No, they are no more, no better than what the Free Grace of God makes them. The most able, the most active Ministers, and the most fam'd for Industry and Success, if they were left to themselves, and to their own Wisdom and Strength, would be the unprofitable Burthens of the Earth; would be like Sampson when his Hair was cut, and the Spirit of the Lord was departed from him, *weak as other Men*, nay, and worse than other Men, like Salt which has lost its Savor. We must therefore look up to God by Prayer, for that Grace which is necessary to make the Stewards of the Mysteries of God both skilful and faithful; and lament the Case of those careless Ministers, who like the Ostrich, are hardened against the Souls under their Charge, as though they were not theirs, for it is a Sign that God has deprived them of Wisdom, and has not imparted to them Understanding.

Job 39. 16,

17.

4. That the Grace of God is particularly to be ey'd and own'd in the Progress and Success of any Work of Charity,

as this here, which *Titus* was active in among the *Corinthians*. In this we may be tempted to think there needs no more but that common Concurrence of the Divine Providence which is necessary to the negotiating of every other Affair; but it seems by this we have as much Need of the working of the Spirit and Grace of God, to enable us to give Alms well, as to enable us to pray and preach well. What is necessary to an Act of Beneficence, must be put into our Hearts from on High, as well as what is necessary to an Act of Devotion. It is God that puts it into the Heart of all the Parties concern'd to do their Part in it: He puts an earnest Care into the Hearts of those that manage a Work of Charity, and a generous, liberal Disposition into the Hearts of those that contribute to it. And therefore the Apostle concludes his Account here of the Liberality of the Churches of Macedonia and Achaia with Praises to God, not only for giving them Estates wherewithal to do Good, but much more for giving them Hearts to do Good with them; Thanks be to God for his unspeakable Gift. Grace to use what we have in the World to the Glory of God, is an unspeakable Gift, for which we ought to be very thankful. And we are taught the same by the Example of David, who when he found the Princes and People generous in their Subscriptions for the Building of the Temple, blessed God for it, as an admirable Instance of his Favour and Grace, by which he put a great deal of Honour upon them; But who am I, saith he, and what is my People, that we should be able to overcome that Selfishness, and Narrow-spiritedness which is in our corrupt Natures, and should offer so much, and so willingly, and chearfully, after this Sort, for all Things come of thee. Those therefore who have any good Project upon the Wheel, should look up to God for his Grace to carry it on, otherwise it will be abortive. Those we perswade to do Good we should pray for, that God would incline their Hearts to it, and then only our Perswasives will prevail.

Let us now close all, with some Inferences from these Observations.

1. If this be so, then those that do Good have nothing to glory in; for whatever Good they do, it was God that put it into

into their Hearts to do it, and therefore he must have all the Glory. *Boasting* is hereby for ever excluded, for in the Lord alone we have not only *Righteousness* for the Remission of our Sins, but *Strength* and *Sufficiency* for the Performance of our Duties. How absurd, how unjust is it for us to be proud of any Good we do, when *without Christ*

Joh. 15. 5. *we can do nothing*; we cannot so much as be
 Phil. 4. 11, *content with such Things as we have*, but through
 13. *Christ strengthening us*, much less do Good with them.

This forbids us to trust to our own good Works, as if by them we could merit any Thing at the Hand of God; we must not entertain such a Thought, not only because *none of our Goodness extends to God*, but because all our Goodness is derived from him; and the more Good we do, the more we are indebted to him for that Grace by which we are enabled to do it, and the Honour he puts upon us in employing us for him. We never speak a good Word, or do a good Work, but it comes from that Good which God first put into our Hearts, so that all being from him, all must be to him; He planted, he watered, and he gave the Increase, and therefore his must all the Fruit be, and to his Honour it must be devoted.

This obligeth us when we have done all to say,

Luke 17. 10. *We are unprofitable Servants*, not only because we have done no more than what was our Duty to do, but because we have done no more than God enabled us to do. It obligeth us also to say, that God is a good Master, who works in us what he requires of us, and then graciously accepts and rewards his own Work, as if it had been ours, so far is he from being that hard Man that reaps where he had not sown. And then our Services turn most to our Honour, when we take Care to transmit the Honour of them to God. *Nehemiah* could not have put a greater Reputation upon his Undertaking to build up the Walls of *Jerusalem* than he did, when he said, it was what God had put in his Heart to do at *Jerusalem*; As it magnifies *Cyrus's* Proclamation of Liberty to the Captive Jews, more than the Policy or the Generosity of it, that the Lord stirred up the Spirit of *Cyrus* to issue out that Proclamation.

This

This holy, good Man we are now speaking of, whose Works praise him in the Gates, took Care that the Praise should not terminate in himself, but be transmitted to God the Father of Lights, and Giver of every good Gift. When a Friend of his that visited him in his Sickness, mentioned to him his great Usefulness, and what Comfort he might now have in Reflection upon it, he humbly replied, *Alas, I have done but little Service for God in my Generation; I wish I had done more: But (saith he) God is good and gracious.* Whence I observe, That the Comforts and Hopes of dying Christians are founded upon God's Goodness, not upon their own. Thus when Nehemiah had done Abundance of good Service to the House of God, and the Offices thereof, his Prayer is, not reward me according to the Greatness of my Merit, but spare me according to the Greatness of thy Mercy. Neh. 13. I was but a Pen in God's Hand, (saith good 22. Mr. Baxter) And what Praise is due to a Pen? Thus as God gives Grace to the most Humble, so he gives Humility to the most Gracious.

2. If this be so, then those that have any Good done them, either for Soul or Body, must give Thanks to God for it, who raised up those that were the Instruments of it, and put it into their Hearts to do it, and perhaps to do it with an earnest Care. We ought indeed to acknowledge their Kindness, and to be grateful to them, but that must be in Token of our Gratitude to God, who in making them his Agents made them his Receivers. But we must look above and beyond them, and give God Thanks for them, and for all the Kindnesses they have done us. Ezra has no sooner register'd and enroll'd the ample Commission which Artaxerxes gave him in Favour of the Jews, but immediately he adds; Blessed be the Lord God of our Fathers, who has put Ezra 7. 27. such a Thing as this into the King's Heart. Which teacheth us, to see and own all the Bounty and Benefit, all the Service and Supply that comes to us by the Hands of our Friends, flowing originally from the Hand of God. And it is the more to be observ'd, if it come by the Hand of those that were unlikely, and unthought of, and that we least expected it from: If Elijah be entertain'd by a poor Widow that has but a Handful of Meal for herself and her Son; if the wounded Man who is look'd upon but overlook'd by a Priest and

Levite, from whom Charity and Compassion might have been expected, and was commonly had, be at Length taken Care of by an honest Samaritan, it must be said, *This is the Lord's Doing, God put it into their Hearts*; and therefore let us give God Thanks for our Benefactors, and all their Benefactions.

When those are removed from us, who have long been upon any Account Blessings to us, good Parents, good Ministers, good Friends, instead of murmuring and quarrelling with God, as if he had done us Wrong, we ought to be very thankful to him that ever we had them, that they were so many Ways useful to us, and were continued to us so long, though we were unworthy of the Benefit and Comfort we enjoy'd by them, and had a Thousand Times forfeited it. And by these Thanksgivings for their Lives, let us ballance and alleviate our Sorrow for their Deaths. *Thanks be to God, who fitted them for Service, and inclin'd them to it, and put into their Hearts an earnest Care for us, though perhaps there was nothing in us either deserving or promising, to recommend us to their Care. God who himself doth Good to the Unworthy, puts it into the Hearts of good Men to do so too; to him therefore we must give Thanks.*

And these Thanksgivings should sometimes look far back; and we should bless God for those that were in the Days of old either by their lasting Writings, or by their lasting Charities, Blessings to Posterity: They may not be pray'd for, as our living Benefactors may, and must be; they are not to be pray'd to, as our ever-living Benefactor may, and must be; But the Benefit we and others receive by the Grace given to them, we may and must give Thanks to God for, who put into their Hearts an earnest Care for those that should come after them. If what is written, if what is done
 Psal. 102. *be for the Generation to come, it fitly follows, The*
 18. *People which shall be created shall praise the Lord.*

3. If this be so, let us hereby be engag'd and quicken'd to do all the good we can in our Places; to do the Good the Corinthians did, that is, to contribute largely and freely for the Support and Encouragement of poor Saints, and poor Ministers, according to the Ability God has given us; to do the Good Titus did, that is, to solicit the Cause both of the Necessitous, and

and of the Deserving, and to procure Assistance for them; to recommend Works of Piety, and Objects of Charity, as Factors in that blessed Merchandize, to bring the *Rich* and *Poor* to meet together: According as our Capacity is, let us lay out ourselves to do good.

Hereby we shall evidence that God by his Grace hath put some Good into our Hearts, which the Good we do is the Fruit and Product of, and by which the Tree is known. If we be truly charitable, from a good Principle; and for a good End, it will turn to us for a Testimony, that the Spirit of God hath been at Work with our Hearts, making us conformable to our Father in Heaven, and making us meet for our Home in Heaven: And how can what we have be made to turn to a better, or more comfortable Account?

Hereby likewise we shall give Occasion to many to praise God for us, and for the Good which by his Grace we are inclin'd and enabled to do: And how can we better serve the Glory of God, and the Comfort of his People, than by furnishing our Friends with abundant Matter for Thanksgiving, that sweet Duty, in which when we are employ'd, we have if any where, a *Heaven upon Earth*. This was one Thing for which Paul reflected with Comfort upon his own Conversion, that those who heard that a Persecutor was become a Preacher, glorified God in him. Gal. 1. 23. And therefore we must let our Light shine before Men, that others may see our good Works and glorify our Father which is in Heaven. Mat. 5. 16. If it be an Encouragement to Charity to think that we shall have the Prayers of the Poor, much more is it so to think that God shall have their Praises. And so the Blessing of him that was ready to perish shall not only come upon us, Job 29. 13. but shall return, as it ought, to him that is the Fountain of all Blessing: And when the Widows Heart is made to sing for Joy, it shall sing to the Praise and Glory of God.

4. This may be Matter of Comfort and Support to us, when useful Instruments are removed from us. That which made them useful was, that Spirit of Wisdom, Holiness, and Love that God gave them, and we are sure that he has the Residue of the Spirit, the Excellency of the Spirit, (so the Word is) with himself, and he can raise

up Men with the *same Spirit*, with the *same Excellencies of Spirit*, that shall do him *as much Service*, if he please, and do it *as well* in their Day, as those that are gone did in theirs. If God make the Spirit of *Elijah* to rest upon *Elisba*, he shall be as much *the Chariots of Israel*, and *the Horsemen thereof*, as ever *Elijah* himself was. And therefore let us not say, That *the Glory is departed from Israel*, though the *hoary Heads*, that were so much a Crown of Glory to our Tribe, be now in a Manner all departed; no, while *Zion's God* is her *everlasting Glory*, he will take Care that *Zion's Sons* shall some or other of them be in their Turn a Glory to her; *Instead of the Fathers shall be the Children*. When God has Work to do, we are sure he will never want fit Instruments to do it with.

It is certain, our Fathers, the best and greatest of them, were no more, no better than what the Grace of God made them; they took all Occasions to own it themselves: And it is as certain, there is the same overflowing Fulness of Grace in Christ that ever there was, *Grace for Grace*; and the same Way of deriving from it; as the *Olive-Tree* is not wither'd, so the *golden Pipes* are not stopp'd up, we have therefore Reason to hope, that the same God that put an earnest Care into their Hearts, will put the same into the Hearts of those who are enter'd into their Labours; and that Grace which was sufficient for them, to carry them through the Services and Sufferings of their Generation, will be sufficient for us too, who have the same Work to do, and the same Temptations and Difficulties to grapple with; and will enable us at Length to finish our Course, as they did, with Joy.

It was a Petition which (as I am told) Mr. Stretton frequently put up to God in his Prayers with his Family, Lord, grant that we may be useful while we are here, and that we may not be wanted when we are gone. God did make him useful while he was here, many Ways useful, useful to the last; and continued him long in his Usefulness: A great Gap is made in our Hedge by his Death; but may we hope that so many others shall be spirited to do the same Work, with the same earnest Care, that in a little Time we may be able to say, that in Answer to the other Part of his

his Petition, he is not wanted? If God has Mercy in Store for your City, for the Land of our Nativity, he will raise up such Men of serious Piety, and Catholick Charity, that shall lay out themselves to do good in the World: I trust he hath raised up some such; and that the mystical Gloss which one of the Rabbins puts upon those Words, 1 Sam. 3. 3, 4. *Ere the Lamp of God went out, the Lord called Samuel,* has its Accomplishment; That is, saith he, *Ere God makes the Lamp of one Prophet to set he kindles another.* God grant it may be so at this Day in our Land, and it would be a Token of Good to us, that God would not depart from us. Nay, if it be true, as certainly it is, that while the Earth remains Christ will have a Church in it, we may be sure that as one Generation of such passeth away, another Generation, some where or other, shall come, to support the Interests of pure and undefiled Religion, that thus the Name of Christ may endure for ever, and his Throne as the Days of Heaven.

A
Short Account of the
L I F E
O F
Mr. Richard Stretton.

HE was the Son of Mr. *William Stretton* of Great *Cleybrook*, near *Lutterworth* in *Leicestershire*, where he was born; but was descended from the *Strettons* of *Stretton* in that County.

He was born about the Year 1632, but the exact Time of his Birth could not be recover'd, for this Reason; his Father being a *Puritan*, and the Minister of his Parish such a one as he could not with Satisfaction bring his Child to be baptiz'd by, he procur'd one Mr. *Moor* to baptize him, who was a *Puritan* Minister in the Neighborhood; and so he was not register'd in the Church-Book.

He often spoke of it as an Instance of God's Goodness to him, that he enabled his Father, though he had many Children, to bring him up a Scholar.

He had his Academical Education at *New Colledge* in *Oxford*, and was Chaplain of the Colledge, as the noted Bishop *Gunning* had been some Time before.

He commenc'd Master of Arts, July 9. 1658. (*prestis exercitiis per Statuta requisitis*) as appears by a Testimonial under the Hand of the University Register.

In the Beginning of that Year, having past through not only his Time, but his Studies in the University, he went

to be Assistant to Dr. Cheynel, at Petworth in *Suffex*, a great Living.

Soon after his Settlement there, he was publickly and solemnly ordained and set apart to the Office of a Preaching Presbyter, (so the Testimonial of his Ordination runs) and the Work of the Ministry, with Fasting, Prayer, and the Imposition of the Hands of Six Presbyters, in the Parish Church of *Arun- del*, Octob. 26. 1658. He having given sufficient Testimony of his competent Age, of his unblameable Life and Conversation, of his Diligence and Proficiency in his Studies, and of his fair and direct Calling to the forementioned Place; and they upon Examination finding him to be duly qualified and gifted for that Holy Office and Employment.

He continued at Petworth till Michaelmas, 1660. when Dr. Cheynel was put out to make Room for Dr. King Bishop of *Chichester*. Mr. Stretton however staid and preach'd there till November, (as Dr. Calamy's Account is) having two Friends, viz. Captain Taylor, and Mr. Bernard, who were very great with the Bishop, and prevented his sending down any other. The Bishop by them offer'd Mr. Stretton 100*l.* per Annum, and the Choice of any Prebend he had that was vacant, if he would be his Curate at Petworth; but Mr. Stretton not being satisfied to conform declin'd it; and upon the Bishop's sending another down to the Place, he quitted it.

Coming to London, quite at a Loss how to dispose of himself, Mr. James Nalton providentially met him in the Street; and having been spoken to by the Lord Fairfax to recommend a Chaplain to him, he presently brought Mr. Stretton to him; and upon his Recommendation, my Lord accepted of him, and took him down with him to his Seat in *Yorkshire*, and soon found himself and his Family very happy in having such a skilful, faithful Helper in the Things of God.

While he was Chaplain to my Lord Fairfax, he married Deborah, Daughter of Mr. Robert Moreton, that excellent, pious, useful Man, that was some Time Minister at Church-Lawford near Coventry, and Sister to Dr. Richard Moreton, who was turn'd out at *Kinver* in *Staffordshire*, and afterwards was a very eminent Physician in London, and one of the College. By her he had a Child or two born, while he was in my Lord's Family; and great Respect was shew'd him by the whole Family.

He

He continued there till my Lord *Fairfax* dy'd, preach'd his Funeral Sermon, which is in Manuscript in many Hands; as is also a Sermon preach'd while he was there on Occasion of the Marriage of a Relation of my Lord's.

My Lord was so wonderfully pleas'd with his great Piety and Prudence, and excellent Behaviour in his Family, that at his Marriage he settled a very considerable *Annuity* upon him for his and his Wife's Life; which was a great Support to him all his Days. Thus God rais'd up Friends for those that in the Way of their Duty cast themselves upon his Providence.

The Respect which was put upon him while he was in my Lord *Fairfax*'s Family, gave him an Opportunity of being acquainted with most of the considerable Families in those Parts. Judge *Rokeby*, who was made one of the Blessings and Ornaments of the Bench at the Revolution, was his intimate Friend.

Many eminent Divines of the Church of *England* he had likewise an Intimacy with; particularly Dr. *Tillotson*, afterwards Archbishop of *Canterbury*, who was born in *Yorkshire*. Mr. *Stretton*, while he was Chaplain to my Lord *Fairfax*, being call'd upon some Business to *London*, Dr. *Tillotson* would have no Nay, but he must preach for him, at St. *Lawrence's* Church, as a Country Minister; but it coming out some how or other that he was a *Nonconformist*, the Doctor had a private Reprimand for it from the Bishop of *London*. It appears by divers Letters to him, found among his Papers, that he had many Invitations of that Kind, in the Country; and a very friendly Correspondence he kept up with many Conforming Divines, who repos'd a great Confidence in him, and testified large Respects towards him.

Upon the Death of the Lord *Fairfax*, he removed to *Leeds*, and settled there with a Congregation of Dissenters, to whom his Ministry was highly acceptable; and there he continued Six or Seven Years.

While he was there he buried Three Sons in a little Time; Two of them of the Small-Pox, in a few Days one of another. It was an Affliction that went very near him, and so strong was his Natural Affection, that it was Exercise for all the Wisdom and Grace he had to bear up under it. There is found among his Papers a Letter of Condolence

lence and Consolation written to him upon that Occasion by the Earl of *Clare*, Father to the late Duke of *Newcastle*, who was then Abroad in his Travels, dated at *Paris*, June 16. 1677. There appears in it much of serious Piety, and a particular Friendship that Noble Lord had for Mr. *Stretton*.

In the Year 1677. he removed to *London*, and several Dissenters that were at that Time either depriv'd of their Ministers, or otherwise unsettled, sat down under his Ministry, and he continued with them to his Death.

In 1679. he publish'd a Paper call'd, *The Protestant Conformist*; or, *A Plea for Moderation*, contain'd in a Letter from one Conforming Minister to another, and his Answer to it. It had no Name to it, but it met with great Acceptance. It was occasioned by a Letter from his dear Friend Mr. *John Thoresby* of *Leeds*, which was likewise printed with it; so I am informed, as likewise of many other Things concerning Mr. *Stretton*, by his Son Mr. *Ralph Thoresby*, now of *Leeds*, that Learned Antiquary, and Fellow of the Royal Society; who has already oblig'd the World with the Additions to *Cambden's Britannia* for *York-shire*, and from whom is expected the *Antiquities of Leeds*, who was a true Lover of Mr. *Stretton*, and was much respected by him.

At the Time when the Persecution was hot against Dissenters, in 1683. he was the first of Ten Ministers that were taken up as living in a Corporation, and had the *Oxford Oath* tender'd them; *That it is unlawful upon any Pretence whatsoever to take up Arms against the King*; which was first contradicted and broken through, and then repeal'd at the Revolution. He had not been at his own House of Ten Weeks, but the very next Morning after his Return to it, (so very vigilant were their Spies and Informers) by Five of the Clock in the Morning he was seiz'd by the then City Marshal, who secur'd his Papers, and would not suffer him to seal up what he made Choice of out of them; and immediately carried him and them before the King and Council: Some present would have his Papers look'd over, to see if they could find any Treason in them, but the King did not encourage it, saying, He believ'd there was no Treason there. As at another Time when a sorry Fellow, one *Fox*, offer'd to swear that Mr. *Stretton*, with my Lord *Clare*

Clare, was in the Plot then charg'd upon the Dissenters, the King laugh'd at the Information, as altogether improbable, and inconsistent with itself.

But though he was dismiss'd from the Council Board, he was proceeded against upon the *Five Mile Act*. That Night the Marshal took his Word for his Appearance next Morning, when according to his Promise he surrender'd himself, and was brought before the Lord Mayor, who carried it with great Respect and Civility to him, importunately desiring him once and again to withdraw for a little Time, and consider whether he could not take the enjoyn'd Oaths, which he hoped he might, and so escape the Penalty of the Law. Mr. *Stretton* told his Lordship, that he would not give the Court the Trouble of waiting for his Answer, for he could not expect to get Satisfaction in that Case, in so short a Time as a Regard to that Court would only suffer him to take; when he had been many Years seeking after it, and could not obtain it. However my Lord Mayor persisted in his Advice, and in Compliance with his Lordship's kind Desire, he withdrew for some Time; but when he return'd told his Lordship, he could not do it; which his Lordship said he was sorry for, for then there was no Remedy, but he must follow the Direction of the Law, and so sent him to *Newgate*, where he continued a Prisoner Six full Months; in which Time he had a Son died, who in his Sickness earnestly desired to see his Father, as the Father no Doubt did to see the Child, but all the Interest he could make would not procure him that Liberty. During his Stay in *Newgate*, Mr. *Smith* the Ordinary shew'd him great Respect, and call'd him up more than once into the Chapel to assist him in preparing the Condemned Criminals for their Death.

After the Expiration of his Six Months Imprisonment he continued still in the City, and preach'd privately in one Place or other among those of his Congregation; and never miss'd any Lord's Day, unless now and then it happen'd that he met with Disappointment in the Place he was to preach at. And he repeated in his Family largely at Night, which he sometimes admitted Two or Three of his Friends to the Benefit of.

When

When King *James* granted Liberty by Proclamation to Protestant Dissenters, he made Use of it; but he never did or would joyn in any Address of Thanks for it, lest he should seem to give Countenance to the King assuming a Power above the Law, and was instrumental to prevent several Addresses.

After the glorious Revolution, when the Dissenters enjoy'd their Liberties and Opportunities again, he applied himself with fresh Vigor to his Work, and with an abundant Satisfaction in the Clearness of his Call to it, as appears by a single Sheet which he then publish'd in the Year 1689. which he call'd, *The Case of the Protestant Dissenters, Represented and Argued*: Which he told a near Relation of his, not long before he died, that he was the Author of. The whole Paper is of such Weight, that Dr. *Calamy* thought fit to insert it at large in his *Abridgment of Mr. Baxter's Life*, pag. 638. to p. 648.

And as he was industrious to justify the Dissenters in their Practice, so he was to promote every Thing that was good among them. It is observ'd before in the Sermon, that he took Care to direct the Removes of the *Morning Lecture*, so as might best answer the Intention of it: A very useful Exercise, which has been kept up for the most Part near Seventy Years, and is now wherever it comes, for ought I see, well attended.

He was likewise active in accommodating some unhappy Differences of Opinion that were among them, so as to prevent the mischievous Consequences of them. The prudent and pious Endeavours which he and others used for that good End, then had, and Thanks be to God, still have, a happy Effect.

He laid out himself very much to promote Works of Charity; it was his *Meat and Drink* in that Way to be doing Good. He spared no Pains in going about in the City, and writing Letters into the Country, to promote good Works. He was a principal Man in setting up and keeping up a Fund, for the Help of poor Ministers and Congregations in the Country, who had not many like minded (though blessed be God, some there are) that naturally cared for their State. He made it his Business to find out the Hands that were able to give and fit to receive, and to bring them together. Those that

that were intrusted with the Distribution of Charities, applied themselves very much to him to recommend to them proper Objects of Charity, which he did with great Prudence and Fidelity; and then no Wonder if those that needed Help applied themselves to him likewise.

He was active to help useful Books into the World, and to encourage the publishing of them, as Dr. *Manton's Works*, to the Fifth Volume of which he prefix'd a Preface, and a very ingenious, handsom one it is. And also took a deal of Pains to furnish Libraries in *Scotland*, and in the private Academies in *England*, with old Books; and to supply young Students that were poor with such Books as were proper for them: A great deal of Money he laid out himself, out of the little he had, and a great deal more he procured from others, for this good Purpose. He knew what Books were useful, and how to buy them at the best Hand, and by his Activity herein many valuable Pieces, that otherwise would still have lain buried in Dust and Cobwebs, have been sent into Hands that are daily making good Use of them.

His pious Zeal herein extended itself beyond the Seas, as appears by the Abstract of a Letter which is found among his Papers, from that great and good Man Monsieur *Frank*, Professor at *Hall* in *Saxony*, wherein he acknowledges to have received the *Polyglot Bible* from Mr. *Stretton*, as a Present to their Library there, and returns his most hearty Thanks to so good a Benefactor.

He was very forward to encourage Youths that he saw or heard to be ingenious, and well disposed, and to assist them in their Education for the Ministry: He kept up a Correspondence for this Purpose with the Universities of *Scotland*, and was instrumental in sending many thither, and procuring Assistance there for some that needed it.

He buried his dear Wife in the Year 1695. and by her he left only one Son living, who has been many Years useful in the Ministry.

About the Year 1707. the Infirmities of Age grew upon him, occasioned by an ill Fall he had as he was returning to his House, after preaching on a publick Fast-Day, in which Exercise he had exceeded his Strength; yet he continued doing Good to the last, and the Spirit was as willing as ever, even when the Flesh was weak, and not weak only, but
much

much pain'd. When he could scarce set one Foot before another, yet he would attend the Lecture at *Salter's Hall*, and the Meeting for Charitable Contributions, very sedulously, though at a great Distance from his House: And but a little before he dy'd, when he was so weak and ill that he could scarce mind any Thing else, yet he stir'd up himself to give Advice and Direction in an Affair of Charity, wherein his Assistance had been much depended upon.

He kept up his publick Work though he struggled with much Difficulty in it, till within Ten Weeks of his Death; and often took Notice of it with Thankfulness to God, that though for some Time before he was confin'd to his House all the Week, yet till *May 4. 1712.* he had Strength on the Lord's Day to go to his Meeting-Place and preach once, and administer the Lord's Supper every Month.

In his last Illness he express'd a chearful Resignation of himself to the Will of God, an entire Dependance upon the Grace of Christ, and a believing, comfortable Expectation of the Glory to be revealed.

Some of his Sayings in his Weakness have been mentioned in the foregoing Sermon, and need not to be repeated.

He finished his Course, and fell asleep in the Lord, on *Thursday, July 3. 1712.* and was buried the *Monday* following, in the Burying-Place in *Bun-hill Fields.* *There the Weary are at Rest.*



F I N I S.

*BOOKS written by Mr. Matthew Henry, and
Printed for John Lawrence, Ranew Robin-
son, Nathaniel Cliff, and Daniel Jackson.*

AN Exposition on the whole Old Testament; wherein
each Chapter is sum'd up in its Contents, the Sacred
Text inserted at large in distinct Paragraphs, each Paragraph
reduced to its proper Heads, the Sense given, and largely
illustrated, with Practical Remarks and Observations. In
Four Volumes, *Folio*.

A Sermon concerning the Forgiveness of Sin as a Debt,
published with Enlargements, at the Request of some that
heard it preach'd in *London*, *June 1. 1711. Octavo.*

Faith in *Christ*, inferr'd from Faith in *God*; in a Sermon
preach'd at the Tuesday Lecture at *Salters Hall*, *May 29, 1711.*
published with Enlargements, at the Request of divers that
heard it. *Octavo.*

Hope and Fear ballanc'd; in a Sermon preach'd at the
Tuesday Lecture at *Salters Hall*, *July the 24th, 1711.* Pub-
lished at the Request of many that heard it. *Octavo.*

A Sermon preach'd to the Societies for Reformation of
Manners, at *Salters Hall*, on Monday, *June the 30th, 1712.*
Published with some Enlargements at their Request. *Octavo.*

Some Account of the Life of the late Reverend Mr. *Samuel Lawrence*, Minister at *Namptwich* in *Cheshire*; with
a Sermon preached on the Occasion of his Death. In
Octavo.

Some Discourses of Walking with God, now in the Press
In *Twelves.*

and
in-

erein
cred
raph
gely
In

ebt
that

mon
711
that

t the
Pub-

on o
1712
avo.

r. S
with
In

Pres